

1. In a media gateway having switching facilities and at least two virtual media gateways, wherein each of the virtual media gateways has a corresponding media gateway controller, a method for connecting a call between virtual media gateways within the media gateway, comprising the steps of:

receiving a call set-up request in an originating virtual media gateway from its corresponding media gateway controller;

creating a shortcut token in the originating virtual media gateway to identify a shortcut in the media gateway;

transporting the shortcut token and the call set-up request from the originating virtual media gateway to the terminating virtual media gateway;

determining in the terminating virtual media gateway whether the shortcut can be supported;

where the shortcut can be supported by the media gateway,

appending call identification information to the shortcut token,

returning the shortcut token and the call set-up request to the originating virtual media gateway,

setting up the call using the shortcut.

2. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the determining step includes determining whether the shortcut token is from a virtual media gateway in the same media gateway as the terminating virtual media gateway.

3. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

where the shortcut cannot be supported by the media gateway,

returning the call set-up request to the originating virtual media gateway,

setting up the call without the shortcut and through a packet core network.

4. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of setting up a plurality of TDM terminations and a plurality of packet terminations for the call in the originating virtual media gateway and in the terminating virtual media gateway.

5. The method defined in claim 4, wherein the switching facilities comprise TDM switching facilities.

6. The method defined in claim 5, wherein the shortcut is between the TDM terminations on the originating virtual media gateway and the TDM terminations on the terminating virtual media gateway.

7. The method defined in claim 4, wherein the switching facilities comprise packet switching facilities.

8. The method defined in claim 7, wherein the shortcut is between the packet terminations on the originating virtual media gateway and the packet terminations on the terminating virtual media gateway.

9. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the transporting step further comprises transporting the shortcut token from the originating virtual media gateway to the terminating virtual media gateway as one of the parameters carried in the SDP message body under H.248 protocol.

10. A system for connecting a call in a media gateway, comprising:

a media gateway having switching facilities and at least two virtual media gateways, each of the virtual media gateways having a corresponding media gateway controller,

receiving means for receiving a call set-up request in an originating virtual media gateway from its corresponding media gateway controller;

creating means for creating a shortcut token in an originating virtual media gateway to identify a shortcut in the media gateway;

transporting means for transporting the shortcut token and the call set-up request from the originating virtual media gateway to the terminating virtual media gateway;

determining means for determining in the terminating virtual media gateway whether the shortcut can be supported;

means for appending call identification information to the shortcut token;

returning means for returning the shortcut token and the call set-up request to the originating virtual media gateway;

means for setting up the call using the shortcut.

11. The system defined in claim 10, further comprising a plurality of TDM terminations and a plurality of packet terminations for the call in the originating virtual media gateway and in the terminating virtual media gateway.

12. The system defined in claim 11, wherein the switching facilities comprise TDM switching facilities.

13. The system defined in claim 12, wherein the shortcut is between the TDM terminations on the originating virtual media gateway and the TDM terminations on the terminating virtual media gateway.

14. The system defined in claim 11, wherein the switching facilities comprise packet switching facilities.

15. The system defined in claim 14, wherein the shortcut is between the packet terminations on the originating virtual media gateway and the packet terminations on the terminating virtual media gateway.

16. The system defined in claim 10, further comprising means for transporting the shortcut token from the originating virtual media gateway to the terminating virtual media gateway as one of the parameters carried in the SDP message body under H.248 protocol.